UN Volunteer Wonjae Lee (left) in a meeting with representatives of the NSA secretariat and CUSO International at the NSA secretariat. (UNV, 2013)

Capacity development and partnership building

Bridgetown, Barbados: My assignment with the UNDP Sub-Regional Office for Barbados and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) as the UNV Institutional Capacity Development Officer is providing exciting opportunities to support ten programme countries in the Eastern Caribbean.

As a UN Volunteer, I have started to explore options and possibilities that provide increased opportunities for non-state actors and civil society organizations to develop their networking, promotion and administrative capacities.

I came to UNDP Barbados and the OECS to support the Governance Team and promote volunteer development. My first task was to meet with the Non State Actors (NSA) Advisory Panel of Barbados and identify capacity development requirements to assist the Panel as it
coordinates the work and contribution of other NSAs.

The Panel was established based on the Memorandum of Understanding between Barbados and the European Union in order to facilitate deeper involvement of civil society in the Barbados/EU partnership.

It is a consultative mechanism for NGOs to discuss priority development issues and to present recommendations to support the Barbados/EU partnership programme. So the more capable the Panel becomes in terms of effectiveness, the more influential civil society will be in the dialogue on partnership development for Barbados.

I have held a series of consultative meetings with the Panel and its Secretariat to discuss the way forward to support their capacity development needs with UNV assistance. Based on the results of the consultation so far, I concluded that the first step forward should be the comprehensive assessment of the baseline capacity of the Panel. To this end, in collaboration with the NSA secretariat, we started to gather information required for the assessment and to share constructive feedback during the drafting process.

I also contributed and reached out to a variety of organizations that expressed their interest in the development partnerships to support volunteer development and promotion in the Eastern Caribbean. UNDP, after extensive consultations with CUSO International, is working on developing collaboration strategies to expand and create a volunteerism support platform to serve the Eastern Caribbean and wider region. I keep close contact with the CUSO staff to identify new partnership programme opportunities.

Moreover, I was also able to develop an interesting relationship with JICA, and we are probing the viability of two potential partnership projects that support new governance and environmental sustainability approaches and provide assistance, as a pilot initiative, to two Caribbean SIDS.

Bio: Wonjae Lee was born in the Republic of Korea and graduated from Korea University with a Master’s degree in International Law and a Bachelor’s degree in General Law. He served three years as an officer in the Republic of Korea Army and spent three weeks as a volunteer at a work camp in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Now he is carrying out a UN Volunteer assignment, fully funded by the Asan Nanum Foundation, as UNV Institutional Capacity Development Officer with the UNDP Sub-Regional Office for Barbados and the OECS.
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